

A COMMON LANGUAGE

(Mr. POE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. POE. Mr. Speaker, there are those who now proclaim that our children be required to learn Spanish. Mr. Speaker, I thought English was the national language. Up until recently, almost all immigrants that came to America learned the language, English. That included the Germans, Dutch, French, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, South Asians and on and on.

So why the push to require Americans to learn Spanish? Why not Chinese? More people in the world speak Chinese than any other language, or German. According to the Census Bureau, more Americans, including my family, claim German ancestry over any other heritage. But when our Forefathers debated this language issue years ago, English won out over German.

It seems to me that it's logical that in the U.S. we ought to speak at least the same language, English. And if people want to speak an additional language, let them choose, not the government, which language to speak.

It doesn't seem too much to require people that come to America that they work, follow the law, and learn the common language. Otherwise, we will become a community of nations, rather than a Nation of communities.

Und das ist nur die Art, wie es ist.

ACTIONS TO REDUCE GAS PRICES

(Ms. SPEIER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SPEIER. Mr. Speaker, despite what Senator MCCAIN's top economic adviser believes, Americans are not whining when they express concern about today's economy. With two oil men in the White House, gas prices have nearly tripled and Big Oil's profits have skyrocketed. The President's action to lift the offshore drilling ban does nothing to lower gas prices now. In fact, his own Energy Information Administration says it will not affect gas prices for nearly 20 years, and even then it will only drop the cost of a gallon of gas by two pennies.

Mr. Speaker, Americans are hurting now and cannot wait 20 years. That's why House Democrats continue to urge the President to release our oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, an action that is not new nor untested and has proven to reduce prices at the pump immediately.

Additionally, I would like us to consider setting a national speed limit at 60 miles per hour. That would reduce the cost of gas by 30 cents a gallon.

DRILL IN AMERICA AND BRING DOWN THE PRICE OF GAS

(Mr. CULBERSON asked and was given permission to address the House

for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Speaker, I want to urge the Speaker of the House to join with our leader, JOHN BOEHNER, in lowering the price of gasoline. They can do it immediately simply by holding a press conference and announcing we're going to work together in a non-partisan way for the good of America to open up domestic energy sources by drilling in the United States. We're the only Nation on the face of the Earth that will not use our own natural resources. This is just fundamental common sense. Schlumberger and Shell have said that there is more shale oil in three Western States than all the oil in the Middle East combined.

We could open up the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve. Congress now can move, and in a bipartisan way, to bring down the price of oil simply by announcing we're moving to open up these domestic sources. The marketplace will respond and the price of gas and the price of oil will drop. This is so simple, it's so easy, it's so good for America.

Let's all stand together without regard to party for the benefit of this Nation, which is hurting so much from high gas prices, and say we are going to use American resources for America to create good, high-paying American jobs.

Drill in America in a safe, environmentally clean way, and bring down the price of gas today.

MEDICARE LEGISLATION

(Ms. SOLIS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SOLIS. Good morning to my colleagues.

As you recall, last month before the House adjourned for the July 4th recess, we passed legislation that would treat seniors and the disabled through Medicare. The legislation passed with strong bipartisan support with Democrats and Republicans recognizing the need to pass this legislation. Last week, the Senate finally followed our lead and passed the bill. Senator KENNEDY courageously returned to Capitol Hill to lodge that vote.

The legislation is now sitting on the President's desk. He has a decision to make. Will he side with private insurers or will he support seniors and the disabled? A veto-proof majority in the House and Senate has now passed legislation that strengthens Medicare and ensures our seniors and disabled that they have access to a doctor that they know and trust.

Mr. Speaker, President Bush should drop his veto threat and join our Members in the House in support of legislation that puts seniors first and the disabled and strengthens a great program known as Medicare. He should sign the Medicare legislation as soon as possible.

THE UNITED STATES MUST DIVERSIFY ITS ENERGY PORTFOLIO

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, the Democrat majority in this House is just refusing to bring forth any legislation that will deal with the price at the pump. I think that they are content to have their constituents either ride a bike or walk to get where they want to go. In my Seventh District of Tennessee, that does not work.

What they might not know is that what we see happening at the pump is happening in every single energy sector. Tennesseans and Americans are paying more than ever for their gasoline, their groceries, and naturally to heat and cool their homes. It's bad enough during the summer driving months, but what my friends across the aisle might not know is that utility officials in Memphis have projected a 30-percent spike in the cost of natural gas for this fall. That is on top of a 13½ percent increase last fall.

This Congress must take action and the United States must diversify its energy portfolio and incentivize all types of energy production: Oil, natural gas, geothermal, hydroelectric, nuclear. It's all there.

The energy crisis affects everyone, Mr. Speaker. It is time for action.

RELEASE OIL FROM THE STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE FOR IMMEDIATE RELIEF AT THE PUMP

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, we've heard on both sides today arguments about the energy crisis. The fact is these arguments are why Congress is held in such low esteem. There are just a couple of things that can be done immediately to help people with the price at the pump, and the major thing that can be done is releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. That's been a proven success with President Bush I, President Clinton, and even this President Bush, and yet he refuses.

Why does he refuse? Because it would hurt the profits of the oil companies. And who gave us this President and this Vice President? The oil companies. This is government of the oil companies, by the oil companies, and for the oil companies. And the people of my district are tired of paying this high price.

Twenty years drilling, you might as well think about your child being born today and planning to see them have a car that gets 80 miles to the gallon in 20 years because that's when the oil that might be pumped today in the Outer Shelf would come to be. Immediate relief is releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

Mr. President, I urge you to have compassion for the Americans who can't afford this price of oil.

THE ENERGY SITUATION REQUIRES A THREE-LEGGED STOOL

(Mr. KINGSTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KINGSTON. Mr. Speaker, it's interesting to hear the Democrats flail around for reasons that they won't put energy issues on the floor. I agree with the preceding speaker. Let's talk about the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. Let's talk about offshore drilling. We haven't moved a single appropriation bill because of the fear that we may have an amendment on offshore drilling.

Now the President has lifted his ban, and what we hear from the Democrats is it will take 10 years, it will take 20 years. It means two things: number one, they agree there's oil out there; number two, there's a discussion about how long it will take.

But my question to them is where are your electric cars? Where are your hybrids that suddenly are going to save us? Those are also going to be 10 years down the road.

We need to put it all on the table. We need to look at conservation, we need to look at alternative energy, and we need to drill. It is that simple. You have got to have a three-legged stool to answer the energy situation. And I don't know why the Speaker of the House is afraid to put it on the floor. That is right. There will not be a debate on it because the Democrats are afraid to put it on the floor.

I say let's have an up-or-down vote on all of these issues.

A GOVERNMENT OF, BY, AND FOR THE OIL COMPANIES

(Mr. MORAN of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. MORAN of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, you know, when you listen to the Bush White House and our Republican friends, you really do get the impression that this is a government of, by, and for the oil companies. And in fact, maybe it is. I mean, after all, President Bush was the founder of Bush Oil Exploration. He was a paid board member of several oil exploration companies. Vice President CHENEY is the former CEO of Halliburton, the world's largest oil services company. He's made millions off Halliburton stock while he's been in office.

Newsweek, in fact, at the beginning of the Bush administration, identified 11 key decision makers in the energy policy area that had worked for or lobbied for the energy industry. And in fact when Vice President CHENEY put together his energy transition team, 50 members were from the big corporate energy companies. None was from renewable energy organizations. Maybe that's why the Bush administration

has cut renewable energy programs by 27 percent, including a 54 percent cut in solar energy.

There are many reasons why we're in this situation, Mr. Speaker, and one big reason is the background and the priorities of the President and Vice President.

HOUSING MARKET MELTDOWN

(Mr. MCNERNEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MCNERNEY. Mr. Speaker, I represent the city of Stockton, California, which suffers from the highest foreclosure rates in the country. I have seen exactly how devastating this problem is for communities, and more important, for the families in our district. I hear all too often the heartbreaking stories of people struggling to keep up. In fact, Mr. CARDOZA, who spoke a minute ago, and I have had foreclosure workshops to provide counseling to help families refinance and stay out of foreclosure.

Our current economic crisis, including the housing market meltdown, can financially devastate many people, and we need change right now so that hard-working American families can stay in their homes. We need to reform the system by raising the conforming loan limits and providing critical relief to hardworking families.

I strongly believe that we can help provide the breathing room that families need so they not only weather the downturn, but come back stronger than ever.

BIG OIL DOESN'T NEED MORE LAND TO DRILL

(Mr. YARMUTH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YARMUTH. Mr. Speaker, while gas prices continue to soar, Democrats are looking for real solutions to give Americans relief at the pump. We aren't repeating the same rhetoric day after day about opening up our pristine lands and waters to drilling only to save pennies per gallon in 20 years. Instead, we've offered energy solutions for today and for the future.

We pressured the President to stop sending more oil to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, which could save about 25 cents per gallon at the pump. We also passed legislation cracking down on price gouging. And now we're calling on President Bush to begin releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

After 7 years of the Bush-Cheney energy policy, written by and for an oil industry raking in record profits, a plan to transition America to a new and more affordable energy future is long overdue. The American people are suffering now and are looking for solutions today. Republicans say we need to open more land for drilling, but the

average American family will spend \$57,800 on gas before that drilling saves them a penny.

Mr. Speaker, House Republicans need to stop looking to the past for solutions to today's problems.

MIDDLE CLASS CONTINUES TO GET SQUEEZED AS ECONOMIC SITUATION GETS WORSE

(Mr. PAYNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, for 7 years now, President Bush and Republicans have catered to the excesses of the wealthiest few while ignoring real needs of working Americans. Over the past 6 years, the median household income has fallen over \$1,000 per year while prices for health care, education, food, and gas have increased well above inflation. How can we expect working men and women to continue to meet the financial needs of their families when they bring home smaller paychecks as prices rise?

The Democratic Congress has been working hard to ensure that working Americans are not ignored. We passed an economic stimulus package that puts money into the wallets of working families. We've also passed legislation addressing the concerns of millions of Americans, including many of those from my home State of New Jersey, who are afraid of losing their jobs or are afraid they might lose their homes.

Senator MCCAIN's chief economic adviser claims that Americans are whining, that the economic downturn is all in their heads. House Democrats realize that we need to turn the Bush economy around.

□ 1030

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered, or on which the vote is objected to under clause 6 of rule XX.

Record votes on postponed questions will be taken later.

NASA 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE COIN ACT

Mr. AL GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 6455) to require the Secretary of the Treasury to mint coins in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 6455

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,